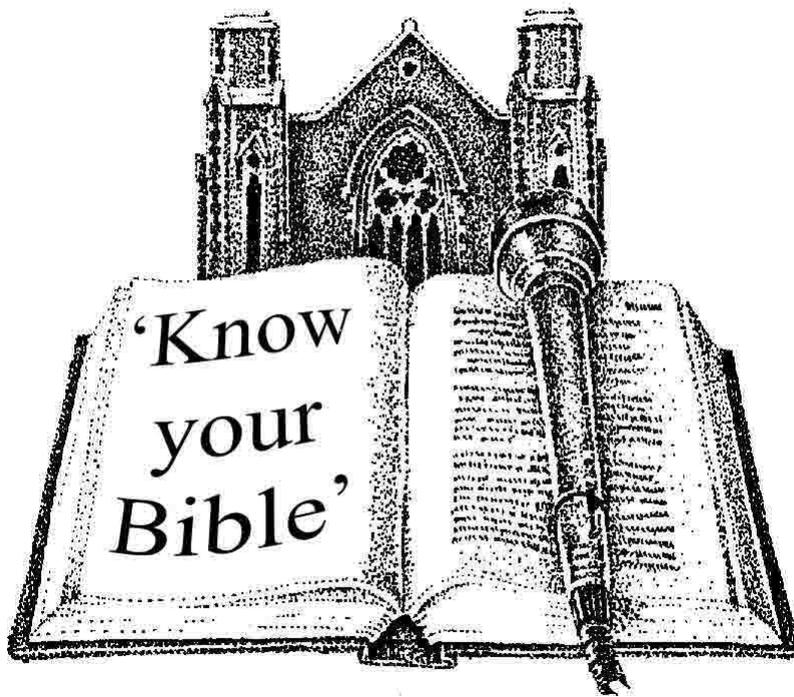


# **What does the Bible Really teach about the Cross?**

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**Study Notes by Stuart Olyott**



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Stuart Olyott**

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# What does the Bible really teach about the Cross? - 1

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The very centre of Christian preaching and Biblical revelation is - THE CROSS!!

- a person who is clear about the Cross, is clear.
- a person who is wrong about the Cross, is wrong.

The first thing the Bible teaches is:-

## **1. It was necessary.**

because of :-

### (i) The need of Man.

- You are
- a creature of God
  - who is an eternal soul
  - made originally in God's image
  - once in a covenant relationship with Him
  - fallen in Adam
  - guilty, alienated, polluted
  - under God's wrath and curse
  - afflicted with the miseries of this life
  - certain to die, be judged, damned
  - and unable to remedy the situation.

### (i) The Character of God.

- God is love. His love ( which is electing love ) rendered the Cross necessary  
John 3:16, Romans 5:8, 8:29, 31-32, 35, Ephesians 1:4-5, John 15:16, Acts 13:48,  
2 Thessalonians 2:13-14
- Before the world was, He covenanted to save a people - Hebrews 13:20, Isaiah 42:6,  
Psalms 89:3, Luke 22:29, John 10:18, John 17: 4,6,9,12,24, John 6:37-39.
- Putting together this and the rest of the Scriptural data, we know the following about  
this everlasting covenant:-

- it was between God and His chosen people. None were present, and Christ acted as their representative and covenant Head.
- the covenant had terms. Christ undertook to fulfil them.
- the covenant had promises. Christ welcomed them.
- the covenant was eternal; Trinitarian; gracious; unbreakable; sure; and concerning particular persons united to Christ.
- the covenant was repeatedly prefigured in the Old Testament; specifically mentioned by Christ; and in this dispensation has been seen to include even Gentiles
- God on His throne remembers His covenant, and Christ is at His side as the covenant Head of His people, and their continuing Surety.

The most important single point to grasp today is:-

**THE CROSS WAS NECESSARY - BECAUSE OF GOD'S COVENANT  
LOVE TO THOSE HE HAD DETERMINED TO SAVE IN CHRIST.**

If you are astray on this point, you are astray.

## What does the Bible really teach about the Cross? - 2

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Last week - we saw that the Cross is the very centre of the Bible, and that IT WAS NECESSARY because of God's covenant love to those He had determined to save in Christ.

This week - we learn that although some people teach that the Cross only made certain things possible, this is not the Bible's teaching. The Bible declares that something was actually done there.

### 2. Something was ACTUALLY DONE there

This is proved by 4 important words:

(i) Sacrifice.

- sacrifices were all concerned with the removal of sin and guilt
- symbolically the person's sin & guilt were transferred to the victim
- this then carried the liability for it - and died in the person's place
- the keyword is SUBSTITUTION
- these sacrifices were types of shadows, to be fulfilled in Christ
- HE is described as a sacrifice - Hebrews 9:11-15, 10:3-4,10-14, 13.10-13
- He, then, has actually substituted for others - the word proves this
- His innocent life has been substituted for the guilty, that sin and guilt might be removed.
  - this is not the language of something merely made possible.
  - but of something ACTUALLY DONE

(ii) Propitiation.

- this word is found in Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2.17, 1 John 2:2, 4:10.
- it means:-
  - God is furious with the sinner as a person
  - another bears His wrath, and appeases Him
  - the sinner is free from God's displeasure, and in His favour
  - God is 'propitious' to him.
- Christ is not said to be One who makes propitiation possible
- He is said to be propitiation itself
- Something was ACTUALLY DONE at the Cross.

(iii) Reconciliation.

- this is NOT a bringing-together of Opposites into middle ground
- it is the bringing near to God of someone who was far off
- it is the e bringing into His favour of someone who was out of it
- this is because the cause of God's anger is removed
- two particularly clear passages are - Romans 5:8-11, 2 Corinthians 5,18-21
  - neither of these two passages teach that reconciliation was made possible by the Cross, but that it was actually accomplished there.
  - something was ACTUALLY DONE at Cal vary!

(iv) Redemption.

- this means the obtaining of a release by the payment of a price
- we still use the word today - pawnbrokers
- it is referred to in the New Testament in Galatians 3:13, 23-26, 4:1-79 Mark 10:45, Acts 20:28, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14.
  - it is clear that redemption was not just made possible by the Cross, but that it was actually accomplished there
  - something was ACTUALLY DONE when Jesus died !

So this is what Christ ACTUALLY did:-

- He substituted as a sacrifice
- He propitiated the wrath of God He brought about reconciliation
- He accomplished redemption

but WHO FOR ??

This is the question we must answer next week.

## What does the Bible really teach about the Cross? - 3

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We have seen that when Christ died on the Cross :-

- He ACTUALLY substituted for sins. Whose sins?
- He ACTUALLY turned away the righteous wrath of God Who from?
- He ACTUALLY reconciled to God. Who?
- He ACTUALLY redeemed. Who?

The Bible's plain answer to these questions is:-

### **3. Christ loved THE CHURCH and gave Himself for IT.**

(i) This is clear from what we learned in the first talk.

- we learned then that it was because God, in covenant love, had chosen to save certain men and women in Christ, that the Cross was necessary at all
- If the reason for the Cross is God's love to THEM, it is obvious that what God did there was FOR THEM!

(ii) This is clear from an examination of other teachings

- Christ died for all men without distinction). say some.
  - but we have seen that Christ ACTUALLY DID SOMETHING at Calvary.
  - if He did this for all men, then ALL men are saved
  - which is something the Bible denies
  - so we cannot accept this answer
- Christ died for no-one in particular, say others.
  - they teach that He only died to make something possible, and people can avail themselves of what He did, if they want
  - but we saw last week that the Bible contradicts this by saying that something was ACTUALLY DONE at Calvary
  - if what was done, was done for no-one in particular, then no-one at all is saved - which the Bible denies
  - so we cannot accept this answer either
- The truth is that Christ died for some, and not for others.
  - this MUST be the truth, for the other answers are impossible
  - it is, as we shall see, the truth the Bible insists on
  - Christ died for those whom the Father gave Him in the everlasting covenant.
  - in the Bible these particular people are called "the church"
  - Yes - Christ loved the CHURCH and gave Himself for IT.

(iii) This is clear from specific Scripture texts and passages

Look at: -      Isaiah 53:8, 11  
                  Matthew 1:21, 26:28  
                  John 6:37-40, 10:11, 15, 26, 29, 15:13, 17:9.  
                  Acts 20.28  
                  Romans 4:25, 5:8 (see 1:7), 8:28-39, 14:15 (see 1 Corinthians 8:11)  
                  2 Corinthians 5:14-15  
                  Ephesians 5:25-27  
                  1 John 4:10 (see 2:12-13, 3:1-2)

YET: -

- there appear to be Bible passages which teach that Christ died for all
- and there appears to be difficulty between believing this truth and our duty to preach Christ to all

These are issues that we must look at NEXT WEEK.

## What does the Bible really teach about the Cross? -3 (continued)

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Tonight we answer questions about what we learned last week, which was that:-

### **3. Christ loved THE CHURCH and gave Himself for IT**

(i) What about the passages which appear to teach Christ died for all?

- Take care with the word "all".
  - in the Bible "all" seldom means "all people everywhere"
  - for instance, look at Luke 2:1-2, John 12:32, 1 Corinthians 6:12
  - to find out what it means in any particular passage - look at the Context...
- Take care with the words "the world"
  - in the Bible "the world" seldom means "all people on the globe"
  - more often it means "the world as a system, the kingdom of darkness",
  - for instance, see John 12:31, 14:30, 14:27, 15:18-19 - to find out what it means in any particular passage - look at the context

- With this in mind, let us at :-

John 3:16-17. God loved what is the opposite of Himself, with such intensity that He sent His Son to infallibly save all believers. (This also explains 1:29, 4:12)

Romans 5:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:22. All united to Adam, die in Adam, All united to Christ, live in Christ. These are NOT "all people everywhere", as previous chapters in Romans, and 1 Corinthians 15:19, 23, make clear,

2 Corinthians 5:19. This occurs in a passage making it clear that all men are NOT saved. "The world" in verse 19 is the "us" of verses 17-18.

Hebrews 2:9. The word "man" is not in the Greek. The "every" are the people being spoken about in the chapter - those united to Christ, at this moment supported by Him, and brought to glory.

1 John 2:2. John denies in his letter that all men are saved. He makes it plain in 4:12 that Christ is the propitiation of believers. His point here is that Christ is only Advocate, because He is propitiation. Is He Advocate for all?? He puts his words this way to teach that there is NO OTHER propitiation - and that all who have a propitiation, have the SAME ONE.

### What about evangelism?

- This is not a problem to believers in particular redemption
  - they believe this truth because the Bible teaches it
  - the SAME Bible also teaches that God sincerely desires the salvation of all men (Ezekiel 33:11, Matthew 11:28, 23:37, 1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9, Revelation 22:17)
  - God is not ashamed to put both truths in the Bible, so they are not ashamed to believe it. It is not a problem to God, only to us
- The truth of particular redemption actually produces evangelists
  - the believer is overwhelmed with God's love to him, as an individual, and expresses his love by obeying Christ's commands (John 14:15, 21, 23-24), including His commands to preach the Gospel to all
  - love for Christ is thus his true motive (as in 2 Corinthians 5:14), and this leads to a true love for the lost
- It keeps such an evangelist from flagging.
  - he knows that around him are sheep for whom the Shepherd died
  - when they hear His voice, they will follow Him (John 10:3-11)
  - he thus sounds out the Shepherd's voice - knowing evangelistic success is certain
  - this fills him with holy optimism, and his zeal does not flag, nor does he give up when difficulties occur
- He sets forth the Gospel in a Biblical way.
  - he does not go round vainly saying "Christ died for you"
  - he preaches not salvation, nor forgiveness, but CHRIST - for it is in Him, and in Him alone, that there is salvation wrought and redemption accomplished
  - he presents Him not as, One Who 'can be' a Saviour, but as the One Who IS the Saviour
  - he proclaims Him not as One who makes salvation 'possible', but as the One Who DOES SAVE!!
  - thus Christ is preached in a way which is worthy of Him, and men are urged to turn to Him who alone does helpless sinners good
- Where particular redemption is not believed, (or is misunderstood), Biblical evangelism declines.
- The Cross is the centre of our faith. Where the centre is perverted, all else goes haywire.